

The Pathless Path

Swami Ramdas

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THE PATHLESS PATH

(Formerly "Guide to Aspirants")

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KOVILUR MADALAYAM

ANDAVAR MANDRAM,

KOVILUR B O.

(VIA) MANAGRI.

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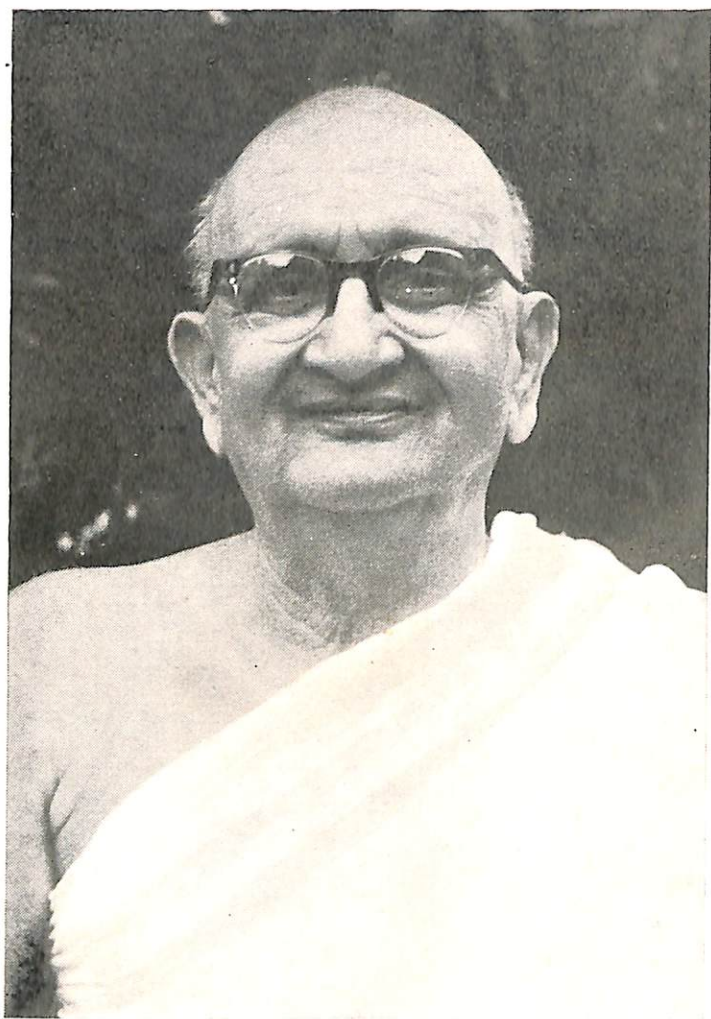
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Om Sri Ram jai Ram jai jai Ram

Let your heart be ever
filled with the sweetness
of Rammam.

All joy and peace to
you.

Hearty Blessings

Ramdas
13. 4. 57

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INTRODUCTION

In a letter Sadguru Swami Ramdas Maharaj states the follows:—"When he (Ramdas) has given the Mantra to an aspirant the first and the last thing that he or she should do is to repeat it constantly, and for the rest, he can act as his inner voice, which is the voice of the Guru, directs him or her. In the columns of the Vision and in the several books Ramdas has written, he has given all possible instructions for the guidance of Sadhakas. A hint here and a hint there can help the Sadhaka on the path."

Taking this as 'Guru-vakya' — a direction from the Guru — the compiler for his own use and guidance collected and arranged the extracts contained in this brochure. As several other aspirants also found the instructions helpful to them and urged the compiler to make it available for all, with the permission of the Sadguru, this brochure is published.

These extracts represent the several rungs of the ladder of spiritual evolution. The extracts under the headings "Hints on Sadhana" and "Meditation" are specially helpful to the aspirant. Going up this ladder step by step, the aspirant may reach the acme of spiritual experience and thus attain immortal joy and freedom.

"GURUDAS"

THE PATHLESS PATH

There are various cults, creeds, sects and institutions in the world which presume to lead the struggling soul to the haven of spiritual liberation and peace. Innumerable also are the ways, methods and disciplines prescribed for purifying and elevating the spirit so that it may reach the goal of divine perfection. Aspirants are everywhere engaged in practising these methods and endeavouring to attain their object. They feel that they are caught in the grip of one or the other discipline and after some trial find that their progress is not satisfactory. Their hearts remain as impure as ever and their minds continue to be restless. If for a moment they gain some peace, again the spirit gets into a whirl and there is a feeling of frustration and despair. Some of the aspirants are tremendously earnest in their quest of immortality and peace. There are others whose aspiration is not so strong and steady. There are still others who make a show of religiosity. But all of them are dwelling in a state of uncertainty and confusion. They feel as if they are moving in the dark, groping for the real way that takes them to light and freedom. They delude themselves into the belief that they will be able to fulfil their quest in the near future.

It is true that all experiences, however bitter they may be, through which the soul passes, are necessary for its upward growth and evolution.

Struggle is indeed a sure condition of progress, but the sooner the soul finds a way out of the labyrinth of confused ideas relating to the spiritual path, the better for him or her.

The true way is not a specified cut and dry method. It does not consist in joining any cult or society, in ceremonies, rituals, or bizarre phenomena. The path is simple if it can be called a path. Invite God who is all love and mercy to take you up and transform you into His radiant and blissful child. Permit His grace to purify, vitalise and take possession of every part of your being. Surrender your all to Him and be conscious of His presence within you and without you.

It you are a real spiritual aspirant, your longing for Him should be sufficiently intense to call down His grace. You should be free from the illusions of this ephemeral world. Your soul should hunger to realise its inherent divine nature. There is no purpose gained by calling yourself this or that, and by donning robes of a particular religious denomination. Masks are useless. Pretension and hypocrisy is self-deception. Break off from all clutches. Come out from the cages of your own making. Come into the open with an unfettered mind, and with the ego vanquished resign yourself to the supreme Truth residing within you. Let your vision expand and develop the universe and beyond. Let your heart embrace all beings in the folds of infinite love. Let your body work imbued with the omnipotent power of the Divine. Let every atom of your frame thrill with spiritual ecstasy and produce uni-

versal harmony. All else is unprofitable talk. All other ways lead nowhere. Do not be deceived.

Do not be a slave of wealth, name and fame. All earthly attainments and possessions pass away. Make God your aim and your goal. You are one with Him. Know this and attain real happiness and peace.

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THE GOAL OF HUMAN LIFE

Life is short. Make the most of it by living in God. Everyday that passes brings you nearer to the end, when you shall have to depart from the world leaving behind everything which you hugged as your own. Life lived in the thought of God is a life lived in true joy and peace. Else it is a lengthening chain of woe that drags you ultimately to the terrifying jaws of death.

Human life is solely intended for the enjoyment of eternal bliss. If, on the other hand, a man makes it a hot-bed of cares, anxieties, fears and doubts, he would only be wasting a rare and precious gift which God has granted him.

Man's greatness lies not
 In fading laurels won
 In earthly riches gained
 In days of wanton revelry.
 Man can rise above man
 To everlasting glory
 To deathless beatitude
 To immortal Life and Joy.

The object of human life is to realise the joy and peace of the indwelling God.

Man's quest for happiness can end only by his realising the fountain of Eternal Joy residing within himself.

Human life is a magnificent gift of God. Raise it beyond the range of mental conceptions and

cogitations. Lift it beyond the relative, conditioned and fettered entanglements of the ever changing phenomenal life so that it might know itself as the ever free, ever blissful and ever existing Reality.

The upward flight of the soul is always towards its perfect identity with the Great One who is the same through and in all. The river of life struggles through all obstacles and conditions to reach the vast and infinite ocean of existence, — God. It knows no rest, no freedom and no peace until it mingles with the waters of immortality and delights in the vision of infinity.

TURN TO REALITY

In this evanescent panorama of life all things and objects are subject to transmutation and dissolution. The Lord alone is real with whom we are eternally united.

Do not seek to find peace and freedom in external circumstances of life, because true freedom is of the mind only, when you are in tune with God, who dwells within you. Let the knocks and hits of life turn you more and more towards God, so that you can become impervious to all kinds of outside attacks upon you. Take the name of the Lord with all strength and faith. Repeat it breathlessly, as it were, at all times, whether you are at your bath, in the kitchen, on the road or in the office. In this, lies the way of your escape. Know this fact once for all and take refuge in the Name.

God is a living Reality. He is more real than the ephemeral interests and things in which man is usually involved. Man's cravings for the earthly achievements shuts him out from the recognition of immortal Truth of his existence. He is so deeply caught in pleasures which are gained through mere sense perception and touch that he becomes blind to the exalted experience of eternal Bliss and Peace.....

So, O beloved soul, unless you link your life with the divine Author of your being, your life is in vain.

Life is a short span and the pleasures you derive in it are transient and fleeting. In pursuing these shadows you are heading towards darkness and are becoming oblivious to the exalted and ever-blissful Truth which is your real being.

Man is miserable because he seeks joy and peace in external conditions and objects which are in their very nature incapable of yielding the perfect state for which the heart of man longs.

Your happiness or misery depends on your state of mind and not upon your external conditions or circumstances. When your mind impelled by desires is flitting from object to object, craving for possession and enjoyment, it lives in a state of restlessness which itself is misery. After possession of the object, come cares and anxieties, after its loss follow grief and pain. The small amount of happiness you derive here is like a tiny, flickering light in a thick, vast mass of darkness; it dies out in a moment only to envelop you in a worse enthralling gloom. Know this; the object you crave for is perishable and transient in itself. How then can lasting peace be derived from it? Hence when the mind wanders in the midst of this ever-changing, impermanent medley of forms and things, it experiences nothing but pain and sorrow. Now then, direct your vision inward and behold God within — that eternal seat of all bliss and peace.

Peace is in that heart in which no wave of desire of any kind rises, and it is to be understood, that the true aspiration of the heart is completely to quell and still down all desires that lurk in it and which cause dissatisfaction, turmoil and misery.

Peace, peace, peace is the cry of the heart—a peace which wants nothing, a peace that is self-existent — a peace that is immortal. This eternal peace is your real existence — it is not a state or truth to be attained but to be realised; because you are ever That.

The transient and ephemeral things of the world are incapable of granting peace. If you would have peace, turn your mind to the immortal source of your life — the deathless and changeless Reality. By constant contemplation and meditation, tune your thought to the Reality, ultimately sublimate it into that divine existence and thereby attain to a peace which knows no change.

We may live for thousands of years and may obtain whatever we desire of the world, but we shall never be happy so long as our hunger for earthly things does not perish.

Renounce all desires of the mind and intellect and enjoy the bliss of the *Atman* even though you may, for its sake, live in a garret, or even turn into a wandering and naked mendicant.

THE CHANGE MUST BE WITHIN

Mere external renunciation is not only not necessary but is not the way.

A man may bring about any change in his external life and environments with a view to gain the inner peace but the solid experience of thousands, who are wandering on the face of the earth in search of suitable environment to attain such a peace, is that they have failed to do so, because the change must be within — in the inner vision.

“Seek within — know thyself”, these secret and sublime hints come to us wafted from the breath of Rishis through the dust of ages.

Moksha is not conditioned by any particular external situation or circumstances. *Moksha* is the realisation of immortality by the removal of ignorance through the attainment of divine knowledge. It is primarily a change in our internal consciousness and vision. A man, who was placed in a certain situation in the days of his ignorance, may still continue to remain in the same situation even after he has attained divine knowledge.

Sannyas is not a thing which another can impose on you, or initiate into. Sannyas does not mean shaving the head or donning the orange robes. It signifies a state of internal renunciation of craving for the transitory things of the world. Mere change

of dress and appearance without mental detachment is of no use whatsoever.

The root evil is attachment which has sprung from the seed called desire — the criminal cause of ignorance. The eradication of desire and attachment means liberation.

RELIGION IS A MATTER OF EXPERIENCE

The path to the source of your and the world's being is not without. You have to go within yourself. You must go past your senses, mind and intellect; you must traverse beyond all your ideas and ideals; you must transcend all limits, conditions and tastes, and then alone will you have the fullest vision and realisation of your immortal root. This immortal root is also the root of all that exists — the visible and the invisible worlds and all beings and creatures in them.

Religion is a matter of experience. Merely by becoming a member of a church, creed or sect, a person cannot be entitled to this experience. By reading any amount of scriptures and sacred books he cannot obtain this experience. By the observance of rites, ceremonies, or worship a man cannot come by this experience. Spiritual realisation is a question of individual effort and struggle The man of true religion when he is on the path, is mainly concerned with his own internal struggle for liberation and peace.

A steady, persevering and concentrated effort and struggle alone can lead the aspirant to the realisation of God. So long as a man is hankering after the pleasures of the senses, his progress on the path is slow and erratic. He must be undaunted in his endeavour and determined in his purpose. He must leave no stone unturned to subdue and eventually eradicate the impure passions of his heart and

mind. A purified and enlightened *Buddhi* alone can entitle the sadhaka to enter the kingdom of eternity.

What is required principally is the withdrawal of the mind from without to within, which means that the restless and roaming nature of the mind must be totally curbed by right thought, right contemplation and right meditation. The mind has to settle down and its uncontrolled dynamics must be brought under subjection. Perseverance and an unflagging endeavour are the qualities of a true aspirant or seeker of Truth. Lassitude, idleness and heedlessness are the enemies of spiritual progress. Awareness, watchfulness and effort are the true qualities of a Sadhaka.

THE TOUCH OF SAINTS AND GURU'S GRACE

The grace of a Saint who is accepted as a Guru is essential to the progress of a spiritual aspirant. To live and act in such a manner that the Guru is highly pleased with the disciple is a sure condition for the working of grace. A true aspirant seeks always to please his Guru by moulding his life in accordance with his teachings.

By a Saint's contact thousands are saved from the clutches of doubt, sorrow and death. He exerts a wonderful influence and creates in the hearts of ignorant men a consciousness of their inherent Divinity. By his very presence he rids the hearts of people of their base and unbridled passions.

The society of saints is the most effective means to awaken the heart to the consciousness of God. The aspirant should approach them in all humility and with an attitude to receive their enlightening influence. Saints are always sympathetic and gracious. They radiate Love, Peace and Joy, for they are the very embodiments of God on earth.

The presence of a saint works like a charm upon the mind. It is at once freed from impure thoughts and attains calmness and serenity. A new light and joy is experienced by the aspirant. He

transcends time and space and becomes filled with a rare spiritual ecstasy.

The God-realized man is God Himself in human form. Ignorant souls cannot recognize divinity in the man in whom the Universal Spirit is realised and attained.

THE DIVINE NAME AS THE LADDER

Take the Name as *Brahman* Himself and using it as a ladder ascend the summit, the supreme God-head with whom you are eternally one.

The Divine Name is a powerful boat that takes man across the whirlpools of life to the haven of his eternal and spiritual nature. His Name transforms man from the human to the Divine. The Divine Name is the one sovereign panacea for all physical, mental, and intellectual ills that have created the sense of diversity and misery in the world. To be in tune with the Name is to be in tune with the Infinite Truth and thus to transmute the lower, stumbling and ignorant human nature, into the glorious self-illuminated nature.

The Divine Name purifies the mind of its ego and desires, and floods the whole being with light and joy.

Repeat the Name so constantly that its enthralling music should thrill, illumine, elevate and sweeten your entire life The Name arrests distracting thoughts, subdues unregulated desires and enlightens the intellect. After enabling its devotee to achieve thorough concentration of mind, it helps to draw the mind inward and attain complete absorption in the Eternal Reality, which in its turn takes him to the supreme goal of self-surrender The Name unlocks the fountain of your heart and floods your being with immortal light, knowledge,

peace and joy. It grants you the loftiest vision and experience.

Fixing the mind on the sound of His Name is the easiest way for concentration. Take it that the sound of the Name is itself a symbol of God. By gradual practice, the external repetition will lead to an automatic functioning of the Name in the mind. When thus the Name comes into the mind constantly, you will attain concentration. By the Sadhana the restless nature of the mind is curbed.

Oh! the charm of the Name! It brings light where there is darkness, happiness where there is misery, contentment where there is dissatisfaction, bliss where there is pain, order where there is chaos, life where there is death, heaven where there is hell, God where there is Maya. He who takes refuge in that glorious Name knows no pain, no sorrow, no care, no misery. He lives in perfect Peace.

In all weathers cling to the Name of the Lord. It is the one plank which does not allow the man, who hangs on to it, to sink and be lost. The Name is the Lord, Guru and all in all.

When the Lord's Name is on our lips, we need not be afraid of anything in this world or in any other world. The Name is simple. It unveils layers of the deep-seated ignorance that had made you oblivious of your divine existence. It acts with a sure, steady and unfailing purpose. It is the real means for bringing about a complete state of self-surrender. Even from the start of the repetition of the Name, you begin to taste the nectar of immortality. As you go on, your joy increases and when this joy turns into ecstasy, it takes you beyond the

body-idea and you become conscious of the Divine within you. Your individual sense disappears, as darkness in the presence of light. When this stage is reached a sadhaka becomes a siddha, i.e., the aspirant attains divine perfection.

The Name brings you self-absorption, and meditation becomes automatic, i.e., you are lost in the sweet rapture of the Spirit the moment you sit silent by yourself. The struggle the Sadhaka usually passes through, to keep the mind centred on the Truth, is not there for votary of the Name. He starts with joy, walks on the path with joy, and reaches the goal which is joy, and ultimately becomes Joy Itself. This is the sweetest consummation, all comprehensive perfection and the highest experience of the God-head which the Name grants.

Mantra is a combination of words that stands for the Supreme Reality. It is so set that by the utterance of it a rhythmic sound is produced which has a marvellous effect on both the mental and the physical system. The sound of the Mantra produces mental equilibrium and physical harmony. It tunes the entire human being with the eternal music of the Divine It lulls the feverishness of the mind. This equanimity in turn awakens the sleeping Divine Consciousness, bringing the soul in direct contact with the in-dwelling and all-pervading Reality One great advantage of Mantra Yoga over other methods is that it is a discipline which is at once self-sufficient and independent. Truly, one who keeps the Mantra always on his lips can attain to the infinite power, wisdom, love and vision of God.

FAITH AND SURRENDER

What is faith? Unquestioning surrender to God's will is faith. Whatever happens is attributed to the workings of God. God is taken as great, good and kind. He is the sole dispenser of all things. Since all events, changes and movements proceed from a heart ever filled with goodness, love and mercy, there is nothing to grumble at, nothing to find fault with, nothing to grieve over, nothing to be anxious about, and nothing to be afraid of — all, all is His doing. He works always for harmony and joy. So in the heart of all things and happenings, it is He who exists and is at work. When this faith is ours, God becomes our never-failing companion, guide and friend, and we do all actions by His will, i.e., by His promptings. He is in us and everywhere about us. All doubts and fears now vanish away and we attain a state of freedom which is itself absolute Peace and Bliss.

Behold, Ram's will alone is supreme—
 Bend and bow to that will
 Come what may—it is Ram who does all,
 And He does all for good.
 For Ram is kind — Ram is Love —
 Ram means always well.

To maintain equilibrium of mind, the sovereign remedy is to submit calmly to the will and workings of God who guides and controls the destinies of the universe.

Never lose your equilibrium under any stress of external circumstances. They come and go — like the clouds in the breeze. Stand firm on the rock of your unchanging and immortal existence.

When the mind is in tune with God, external conditions, however unfavourable, do not affect us. Difficult situations, disappointments and clashes come to all alike—in a greater or lesser degree. Great is he or she who remains calm and serene in all circumstances. This attainment is possible only when the mind is made to dwell in the Divine and all actions are dedicated to Him.

Just as an unshapen stone can be fashioned into a beautiful image worthy of adoration and worship only after it has received many a stroke of the chisel, so also a distorted and inharmonious life has to pass through many a trial, suffering and tribulation, before a great change could come over it, before the life of ignorance could be transmuted into a life of immortal splendour and joy, fit to be revered and adored.

Don't ruminate over the past. All that happened in the past has been for good. So no thought need be taken of it. Have no thought or anxiety about the future. What is to happen does come to pass in spite of yourself. Be prepared to stay in any and every condition calmly and coolly. No worry or anxiety can change the course of things as ordained. And in the present think only of Ram and perform all actions as offering to Him.

HINTS ON SADHANA

Invite God who is all Love and Mercy to take you up and transform you into His radiant and blissful child. Permit His Grace to purify, vitalise and take possession of every part of your being. Surrender your all to Him and be conscious of His presence within you and without you.

Meditation at stated times and remembrance of God at all times is necessary in the case of all sadhakas Conceive a thirst and hunger for God. Feel discontented for want of that hunger. A lukewarm desire does not result in much progress. Pray to God to give you that keen hunger. If you do sadhana, you will get that hunger. Only be thorough and steady. Do not do things off and on. Have your sadhana every day with greater and greater intensity.

While in the period of sadhana, never bother yourself with the thought of *siddhis*. Realise God first, and all else will come to you automatically. All doubts depart as sadhana becomes regular.

The path of the spiritual aspirant is not an easy one; but one who is determined to progress along it, is sure to reach the goal.

The only way to control the mind and free it from undesirable thoughts is to put your life under strict discipline. Above all, don't come under the insinuating influence of laziness and inactivity. There is no greater enemy that comes in the way of an aspirant's advance on the path than laziness.

The simple rules are as follows:—

1. Get up in the morning not later than five o'clock. Utilize the morning hour till six o'clock in the repetition of the Divine Name and meditation of the Lord's exalted attributes.

2. Take only Satwic, i.e., non-irritant food and eschew all stimulants.

3. Don't read flimsy and sensational literature but be reading the lives of saints and their teachings.

4. Never enter into discussion on religious or any other subjects with anybody.

5. Be unassuming and simple in your habits of life.

6. Be good, kind and serviceable to all who are in need of sympathy and assistance.

7. Keep the Name of God always on your lips whenever you are disengaged from other works.

8. Conceive a love for solitude and have resort to it now and again so that you can more easily tune your thought with God in an undisturbed place.

9. Seek the society of saints.

10. Maintain Brahmacharya.

11. Don't court the society of men who are immersed in sensual pleasures.

12. In other words, keep yourself perfectly pure in thought, word and deed.

A well-regulated life, having a keen sense of duty, and a patient and cheerful nature, are the characteristics of a true devotee of God.

Do not be impulsive and take steps to change the course of your present life and then give room for repentance The goal is the awareness of your immortal existence and selfless service to humanity. You have to begin to work out this lofty object in the position in which you are at present. Of course there is struggle and difficulty. Nothing great can be achieved without a strenuous endeavour.

The easiest method for concentration is repetition of the Divine Mantram. Spend some time early morning and in the evening in the remembrance of God. Read Bhagavad Gita everyday. Lead a pure and simple life. Be kind and helpful to all who come in contact with you. Believe that the service of the suffering and the needy is the service of the Lord.

Never speak or encourage talk about yourself. Avoid all personal references. Speak always of Ram — His glories, His power and His peace.

Give up all externalities and show — even show of piety.

The Sadhaka should take very light food in the evenings. He must have only moderate sleep. He must never sleep in the afternoon or during the day. He must avoid worldly associations.

The true way is not an absolute seclusion for meditation, nor a total absorption in the activities of life in pursuit of material ends, but a combination of the two, i.e., some hours of the day set apart for meditation so that the work in which we would be engaged during the other hours may be done as

a spontaneous and blissful outflow of the Eternal Reality dwelling within us.

Do not engross yourself in action, however noble and beneficent, without knowing the Eternal Source of all action within you.

Question: Which is the main pitfall a spiritual aspirant should be guarded against, when he is walking on the path of God-realisation?

Answer: That is, spiritual pride due to a conceited consciousness of his progress on the path.

What often stands as an obstruction in the way of aspirant's attaining the goal is the ego-sense (vanity) born of a consciousness of his various acts of self-discipline. He thinks that he is superior to others because of the austerities he performed. Therefore it would be well for the Sadhaka from the very inception of his sadhana to tutor the mind from time to time, into thinking that the works of sadhana done by him are so done by the will and power of the Lord alone.

A sadhaka should not reveal his spiritual experiences to anybody except to his Guru or a Saint. If he does not follow this rule, he will not only not receive a sympathetic hearing but also he will become so conscious of his spiritual advancement that this will prove a great impediment to his progress.

Whenever dejection overtakes the aspiring soul in his struggle, let him ward it off by surrender to the in-dwelling spirit.

Imitation in spiritual field retards progress. Lipping in the words of great souls is not a sign of genuineness. Dive down deep within yourself and bring out the pearls of your own spiritual experience. Reveal your own light. Be the blazing Sun of Truth yourself and beautify your life and that of the world.

Imitation is dangerous. Each soul must seek his evolution on the spiritual path in his own individualistic and unique way.

To increase Bhakti, three things are necessary:—

- i) Constant repetition of Ram-Nam;
- ii) To see Ram in all objects and beings;
- iii) To undergo all difficulties in a spirit of resignation and renunciation.

Steps that lead to surrender:—

- i) Acknowledgment of God's will as supreme;
- ii) Realisation that God is always good and loving;
- iii) Acceptance of the fact that God has assumed the form of the Universe, of all creatures, of all beings and things in it.

There is no greater victory in the life of a human being than victory over the mind. He who has controlled the gusts of passion that arise within him and the violent actions that proceed therefrom is the real hero. All the disturbances in the physical plane are due to chaos and confusion existing in the mind. Therefore to conquer the mind through the awareness of the great Truth that pervades all

existence is the key to real success and the consequent harmony and peace in the individual and in the world. Any amount of patch-work on the surface for the attainment of equilibrium and tranquillity can be of no avail. The heart should be purged of its base ambitions for material wealth, fame, possession and power at the expense of others. The true soldier is he who fights not the external but the internal foes.

MEDITATION

Mind is a veil that shuts you from the splendour of your immortal spirit, which is your real being. Tear up this veil by means of constant meditation and self-surrender. Retire within yourself from time to time and lose your little ego in the infinite consciousness of your supreme self You are verily the embodiment of truth. Wake up to this awareness.

Concentration:—

What is needed for the beginner is to arrest the restless nature of the mind, a steady practice at concentration. To achieve this end, Ramdas found the constant repetition of the Guru-Mantram as a sovereign means. The wandering mind is thus brought under control and is fixed at one point.

This point is God — the symbol and spirit of the Mantram.

Meditation:—

Side by side with the repetition of the Mantram bring into the mind the glorious attributes of God. "God is within me — God is Infinite — God is Bliss, Purity and Peace — God is Light of Lights and the Power of Powers — God is the Master of Worlds — God is the Doer and the Non-Doer at once — God is Knowledge, Love, Compassion and Forgiveness — God is the one Truth and one Reality — The Universe is God's Self-revelation — God dwells in all beings, creatures and things —

God fills all spheres and planes of life — My body, mind, senses and intellect and soul are all God's — God permeates my being — I am God's very image — both as the Revealed and unrevealed — There exists nothing but God — God is all in all — GOD IS ALL."

Meditation is nothing but a method of auto-suggestion. The veil of ignorance which is an obsession can be removed only by a continued hammering on the mind, of the Immortal nature of your true being. Successful meditation requires a well-controlled and concentrated mind, for which the following rules have to be observed:—

1. Diet, Satwic food, i.e. Non-irritant foods.
2. Solitude.
3. Society of saints.
4. Devotional music.
5. Reading the lives and teachings of saints.

Posture and Method for Silent Meditation:—

1. Sit up in any steady asana suitable for you with your spinal cord and head erect.
2. Shut your eyes but internally direct your gaze between the eye-brows and gradually to the crown of the head. Sit fixed in this gaze.
3. Repeat the Mantram mentally for some time to stop the wavering mind.
4. Then when the mind is calmed down, mentally repeat the great attributes of God one by one.
5. This process repeated from day to day will bring on self-absorption giving you the vision of lights, etc.

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6. Go still deeper into the realm of utter silence and stillness of your higher self or spirit, and rise completely above the body. Now you will realise the un-differentiated aspect of God bringing on the experience of your absolute identity with God.

7. Come out of this state — which would be difficult in the beginning but can be possible by the exercise of a strong will and for you the world outside will now stand transformed as the very expression or manifestation of God — everywhere the Light of God will dazzle your eyes; even in the apparent diversity and activity of nature you will strangely be conscious of an all-pervading stillness and peace of the Eternal — a consciousness which is unshakably permanent.

You will also feel that you are liberated from the harassing dualities of life followed by the crowning experience of an abiding state of ineffable ecstasy.

Ineffable Ecstasy:—

The ineffable bliss experienced when the individual sense is dissolved in the Supreme Consciousness of God is the highest acquisition of human life. When the source of immortal joy is opened within us, it flows and saturates every fibre of our being, internal and external, and makes our life at once a waveless peace and ceaseless thrill of ecstasy. Death, fear, and grief have then no significance for us. You see and feel a round of joy and delight in all movements, in the visible expressions of the undivided and eternal life and Truth. The one splen-

dour of Divine light envelops and pervades all forms and things; the one VISION OF ENDLESS PEACE AND BLISS dazzles and enchants you everywhere. Nay, you realize that you and the Universe are form and substance of the Infinite Truth. Oh! the sublimity of this exalted state — indescribable state — blessed indeed are those who are filled with this inexhaustible nectar of Immortality.

SAMADHI

One kind of Samadhi consists in sitting down in a definite posture and by meditation merging oneself in the Infinite entirely forgetful of the world outside.

The other kind of Samadhi (Sahaja Samadhi) is the state of ecstatic bliss which saints enjoy at all times under all conditions.

We are after Peace and Joy which abide in all conditions and situations. This joy is called Sahaja-nanda and the state corresponding to it is called Samadhi. In this supreme attainment the liberated soul enjoys divine ecstasy at all times unruffled by the passing phases and events of external phenomena of life, because he sees and experiences in every change and activity nothing but the movement of the Eternal Anand.

The former kind (the first kind set forth above) is necessary for attaining this one (Sahaja Samadhi). Realise God as Love and the Universe as God. Realise God both with form and without form, with attributes and without attributes. Formless God without attributes is inexpressible. Formless God with attributes is Love, Light, Bliss, Truth, Wisdom and Consciousness. God with form is the Universe and all in it.

You are wise, you are well-read and you have gone through spiritual practices, you have put on the garb of sanctity, you can preach and you can

pose — these are all nothing if you do not experience the blissful union with the Beloved. The Saguna you are after is an image of your own mind and it cannot satisfy you. You ought to rise beyond all forms of sight and mind. The true Saguna or the body of the Lord is the Universe itself in which He is immanent, and by His power He is causing, in the manifestation, birth, growth and dissolution of all beings and things. He is also transcendent as pure Spirit. Your body is one of His expressions. Your activity has its inception in the Infinite power of God. Don't be deluded by a desire to behold things which are conditioned and momentary — mere phantoms of your mind. Have the true longing to realize your immortal nature and your union with omnipresent and omnipotent God, who is the supreme Lord of the Universe. Purify the mind and heart by proper discipline and entitle yourself to this glorious vision, and attain perfect freedom and Eternal Bliss.

Until the aspirant of immortality goes beyond name and form to the height of the impersonal God that dwells within him, until he tunes his mind and life to the Divine symphony or movement thrilling through the Cosmos, until he is freed from all limitations of thought, time and circumstance, until he beholds the entire universe as the veritable expression of his own infinite Self, he cannot realize and experience the all-comprehensive glory and the all-absorbing splendour of the greatest Truth—God!!!

AFTER REACHING THE HEIGHT

Even after reaching this great height of the all-inclusive vision of the Reality in whom all diversity is resolved into one, the God-realised soul assumes a position separate from the great Truth. He calls himself the son, child, servant or devotee of God. Here the duality is assumed knowing that the devotee and God are truly one. Why this assumption? Because in the sphere of activity the God-realised one prefers to play the part of a lover or servant by which he can enjoy the ineffable bliss of love. Love works only on the plane of duality. All his actions, great or small, bear the stamp of love, for love is his being and love is his life and in love he finds the fulfilment of his mission.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF MAN ENDOWED WITH COSMIC VISION

Firstly, he knows he is immortal, being one with God.

Secondly, as a corollary to the first he is fearless of death and all else.

Thirdly, he transcends the conventional sense of virtue and vice. When a man dwells in the presence of God, all vices cease and he becomes crystal-pure.

Fourthly, his ego is obliterated and he transcends the three gunas, Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas.

Fifthly, he is all joy, having drunk the divine nectar.

And finally, he develops a sweetness of personality which, as a magnet, draws people to him, not to bind them down even to himself but to free them in the truest sense of the term.

INNER VOICE

Inner voice speaks in the devotee when he has surrendered up his body, mind and soul into the keeping of the Divine who dwells within him. In this state the body becomes the willing instrument, the mind is enlightened with divine radiance, and the soul unites and identifies with the Supreme Spirit. Now God's guidance is felt at every step and the devotee's life becomes a spontaneous expression of Divinity in all its modes of activity. His consciousness becomes one with the universal Consciousness and he transcends the limitations of time and space. His vision becomes all inclusive and all embracing Equality of vision becomes the background of the devotee's life and this outlook illumines his entire external life.

JIVAN MUKTA

Jivan-Mukta is he who has totally surrendered himself to God; so much so, that God alone works through him, his individual ego having been conquered. He always lives in God and God lives in him. He craves for no fame, no wealth, no earthly pleasures of any kind. In the inner consciousness of his being he finds the source of all bliss, and so lives contented under all conditions; no change of any kind in his life disturbs the even tenor of his mind.

He remains under all conditions at peace with himself. Nothing daunts him.

If he undertakes any work, it is always without any selfish motive; and no threat or pain or even death will prevent him from the performance of such work, since he takes it that the work is enjoined on Him by God Himself.

He may often have not even the feeling that God is working through him but he does all work without the least sense of egoism.

People in general will extol him at one time, and speak ill of him at another. He is bound by nobody's opinion.

He is free — ever free. Om Sri Ram!

RECAPITULATION

I

Question:—Swamiji, we want you, who have seen God, to show us the way which leads to Him, so that, we too can see Him face to face.

Answer:—Well, Ramdas shall try.

The first thing essential is *keen aspiration*. You must love God and long for His darshan more than anything else; where your love is there your mind automatically runs. This leads to the second step, namely *purification of the mind*. When the mind turns instinctively and always to God, it will be cleansed of lust, greed and wrath. Cultivate simultaneously the purity of tongue and the body. Let your speech be free from slander, abuse, gossip and lying and your body from the three sins of theft, adultery and violence. As Ram slew the ten-headed Ravana, so will Ram's Name help us to slay this ten-headed monster.

The third step is to *conquer the ego*. Through generations of wrong thinking we have come to believe that it is "I" who have done this and done that. This "I" is an illusion which must be eliminated from our life and thought.

The Gita teaches the two-fold aspect of God, i.e., the Prakriti and the Purusha. The former is the outer manifestation of Purusha in various changeable and perishable forms, and the latter the Inner, Immutable and Eternal Truth or Spirit permeating all that seems. Purushottama or God

includes both and transcends them. He can only be realised through experience and being infinite, cannot be fully comprehended, much less described. While you do life's duty, just place yourself as an instrument in the hands of God who does His own work in His own way, ever fulfilling His supreme purpose of promoting harmony in the world.

Surrender both the work and its fruits to Him and this will bring you to the stage where you will be able unreservedly to surrender all that you are and have to God. You will then see God in all, and all in God. This is the state of COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS in which is all Joy and Peace. Once a man is all joy he has nothing to want for himself and from the plenitude of his joy and peace he just gives himself away to the selfless service of the Universe.

In the attainment of this stage, *Satsung* and *Meditation* are great aids as also the *Guru's Grace* which removes the thick outer veil from the devotee's mind. Always seek the company of good and great souls who will inspire you by their life and example no less than by their counsel and guidance. At a fixed time everyday while you are fresh and clean in body and open and alert in mind, practise meditation and go as a little child before the Divine Mother waiting for your arrival in the inmost shrine of your heart. Practise *Introspection* and find out and seek to eliminate all that is of self from your mind, so that it may then reflect the pure, radiant light of Truth that is God. Above all, with sincerity and longing in your heart, chant His Holy Name; the Name is the way to the Goal that is God

II

THE PATH OF GOD-REALISATION

From the experience which God has granted him, Ramdas sets down here an outline of the path which an aspirant traverses, when he has made the realisation of God, the sole aim of his life. On this subject Ramdas' authority is derived from the fact that his experiences at different stages of his Sadhana bear a close resemblance with those of all saints and sages of the world who had the vision of God.

What is necessary as the first step on the Divine Path is Bhakti. Bhakti means a keen burning desire to realise immortal peace and freedom. The Bhakta must be seized with a discontent which never ceases until the goal is reached. But how could awakening in the heart of a being come? What does shake him to his very foundation and create in him this longing for the Eternal? The answer is *the society of real sages is the thing*. A sight and touch of him works on the Bhakta like a magician's charm. As the bird unconscious of its captivity remains in its cage, apparently quiet and contented, but the moment it discovers that it is imprisoned within it, it leaves no stone unturned in its struggle for Freedom; so also the soul of an awakened man flutters and trembles within him and becomes so restless that it is drawn inevitably on the path of vigorous discipline for self-liberation. This hunger of the soul which grows in volume day after day,

gives rise in him to the second essential step on the path — Vairagya.

Vairagya means withdrawal of the mind from its attachments and attractions to the external objects of life. Now it is that he clearly understands that the cause of his bondage and ignorance is due to his deep love for those whom he holds very near and dear to him. His mind which was so long involved only in the interests, worries and fears, concerning those objects or beings to whom he was bound by ties of affection and sense of possession, now recoils. He further knows that the happiness which he enjoyed from those objects and beings is a passing chimera or illusion. Now he aspires for that peace and joy which is real and everlasting. Thus a spirit of dispassion for the world takes possession of him. At this stage he starts with earnestness and determination the *Sadhana* for control of mind and will, which leads him to the third step — Concentration.

Concentration is a waveless and fixed state of mind. To gain this purpose, he takes up any mental practice best suited to his nature, condition and environment. Concentration is attained by striving to fix the mind on one thought to the exclusion of every other. This thought must represent or symbolize the eternal Reality dwelling within his own heart. The world that we behold made up of five elements — earth, water, fire, air and ether — is a projection from the supreme Truth; so by concentration on any element of the world manifestation taking it as the very expression of the Ultimate Reality, the mind through the attainment of one-

pointedness is merged in the Absolute Truth. Hence for *Upasana*, for the purification and concentration of the mind, an image, a river, fire, air, light or sound is prescribed. Among the symbols for concentration those that are largely employed are, air, light and sound. Air relates to Pranayama or breath-control; Light denotes worship of luminous bodies like the sun, moon, etc.; sound stands for repetition of OM or any Name of God; the greater importance attached to the first and third method among them is because in these cases the Sadhaka need not depend on an external object for concentration. However, whatever path he adopts, provided he is determined and persevering, he will arrive at the next step which is *Meditation*.

Meditation is purely a discipline of thought. The concentrated thought is continuously made to dwell on the glorious attributes of God, such as that He is Eternal, Omnipresent, All-Powerful, All-Knowing, Changeless, Ever-Peaceful and Blissful Truth. The meditation continued with persistency terminates in self-absorption, i.e., *a state of super-consciousness*. Here it must be noted that the Sadhaka conceives a craving for solitude or for a place free from the noise and bustle of the work-a-day world. He adopts a Satwic diet instead of hot, pungent and stale food. The changes that are now observed in him are a substitution of gentleness for harshness, kindness for hate, calmness and equal vision and love for attachment and egoism. Humility, sweetness, and cheerfulness mark all his thoughts, words and movements. He avoids the society of the pleasure-seekers of the world, and

finds solace, peace and joy in the company and service of saints and devotees of God. Now the one theme of his thought and talk is God and His glories. Simplicity and child-like nature become manifest in him. From meditation to the next step — a step which is the crowning glory of his supreme attainment — *Samadhi*, is short and quick. The experience he gains when he gets the full vision of God baffles description.

Samadhi or God-vision:—

Attempts are still made to express something of this lofty experience. He says: "I am an illumined soul — illumined with the light of Divine Knowledge that I am the great Truth itself. My individual life has completely merged into the Universal and Eternal Spirit. Now I have reached the goal. I have become the very God in the human form. I live and move in Infinity and Eternity. I have come to the end of the path — God-realisation, i.e., to the status of SAT-CHIT-ANANDA!"

Om Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram!

III

The Supreme Brahman is the sole cause of creation, preservation and destruction. The great Reality has incarnated itself in India and other parts of the world in different ages to subdue evil and establish the rule of love and righteousness. Rama, Krishna, Buddha, the great Rishis, Mahatmas and Saints point to the one goal as the highest aim of life, viz., liberation and union with God. Human life is solely intended for attaining this blessed state. The supreme Lord is seated in the hearts of all beings and creatures. He is absolute Existence, Consciousness and Bliss, Sat-Chit-Ananda. You can realise Him through one-pointed devotion and complete self-surrender. The initial step on the path to this goal is purity and control of mind which are acquired through concentration. An easy method for concentration is constant repetition of the divine Name and performance of all actions as a sacrifice to the Lord. You may call God by any name. Name itself is Brahman. Reiteration of the Name coupled with the meditation on the attributes of God purifies the mind. Prayers, hymns and fasting are necessary aids. We must develop the Divine qualities of compassion, peace and forgiveness. God reveals Himself in that heart in which these ennobling virtues reside. Now, the Divine Light shining within you dissolves the ego-sense and your identity with God-head is realised. This experience grants you the knowledge of immortality. There-

after, you will dwell in a Divine consciousness and your vision becomes universalised, bringing you supreme peace and ecstasy. Now it is that you behold the whole universe as the very expression of God, whom you have discovered within you. Now God is everywhere for you — in everybody and everything. This transcendent vision unlocks the infinite fountain of Love in your heart — a love that fills and embraces the entire cosmos — all distinctions now disappear in the equality of this vision. This supreme state of beatitude bestows on you liberation and immortal joy. Believe, that incarnations or divine teachers like Jesus Christ, Mahomed, Zoroaster and others are also manifestations of the same Great Truth. Verily, all the different religions are so many paths that lead mankind to the one Universal God!

Om Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram!

CONCLUSION OF "GITA-SANDESH"

A brief and concise summary of the whole Gita will now be presented to our readers. At the start the Lord awakens the ignorant soul to the existence of the root evil which has brought about his bondage and the utter oblivion of his Divine and immortal nature. This root evil is Moha or attachment which has sprung from the seed called desire—the primal cause of ignorance. The eradication of desire and Moha means liberation. Liberation consists in the identity of the soul with the immortal Atman. This deathless state is realised only when the mind of man, through a burning aspiration for freedom, is withdrawn from its association with the perishable body and the objects of the senses and is directed through concentration towards the eternal truth of his being. The soul has to pass through various sadhanas or spiritual practices before he can unveil the glory and the magnificence of the Atman dwelling within him. In fact, ignorance consists in the forgetfulness of the soul of his eternal and infinite nature. So all the sadhanas are for keeping up a ceaseless remembrance of the great Truth which the soul has forgotten and which he is in reality. Ceaseless remembrance brings on a divine consciousness in which the soul discovers himself to be the all pervading, eternal and changeless Truth. In this attainment the soul rises beyond the notion of the body and enjoys the bliss of immortality by rising superior to the Gunas of Prakriti and the Dwandwas born therefrom.

The liberated soul freed through the realisation of the Atman, which is only one aspect of the Lord, still strives to know and merge in the supreme Godhead in all His aspects and existences. Here starts the Path of utter self-dedication leading the awakened soul to a vision and status which baffles description. He now beholds the entire universe and all beings, creatures and things in it as the very expression and revealment of the invisible, infinite, immutable, eternal, unthinkable and transcendent supreme Reality. He experiences not only the unchanging calmness and peace of his oneness with God in the universe and beyond, but also the bliss of the pure, intimate and loving communion with Him in the visible universe and all activities in it. So it is made clear at the end of the Gita that the highest acme of God-realisation is to be a perfect devotee of the Lord—a veritable embodiment of divine love. Such a devotee is the very form and expression of God or God Himself in human form. The Purushottama has revealed Himself in his (the devotee's) heart and has absorbed him into His ineffable and extremely wonderful being. This is the Goal and "Gita Sandesh" is to take the soul to this goal.

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram.

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HINDI

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The Pathless Path

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

After receiving initiation of the *Ram Mantra* from his father, Swami Ramdas, who was then known as Vittal Rao, renounced the worldly life in 1922 and wandered as a mendicant Sadhu all over India and in the Himalayas, in a frenzy of God-intoxication, with the holy and all-powerful *Ram Mantra* ever on his tongue and with God as his only refuge and guide. His was the completest surrender to the Will of God.

Many years of wandering life brought him finally back to South Kanara. Having attained spiritual liberation and God-vision, he started his mission to guide and serve mankind in order to awaken it to the awareness of God. He founded an Ashram— named Anandashram—near Kanhangad, North Kerala, which is fostered by love and care by Mother Krishna-bai, his foremost disciple and a Self-realised soul.

Swami Ramdas' writings come from the deeps of Reality and therefore go straight to the heart. In 1954, he and Mother Krishnabai went on a world tour and hundreds of their devotees, friends, and admirers, who had loved and venerated them from a distance, had a chance to come into close contact with them. Since the last FIVE decades Anandashram has been a powerful spiritual beacon, and thousands have been constantly visiting it, carrying home with them the torch of Light, Love and Service lit at the feet of the great Master.

Swami Ramdas attained *mahanirvana* in July 1963.